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ABSTRACT

In the California Community Colleges (CCC), noncredit adult education courses provide remedial, developmental, occupational, and other educational opportunities for students who do not need to obtain unit credit at the time of enrollment. Of California's 107 community colleges, 95 offer noncredit instruction. Community colleges, together with high schools and unified school districts with adult schools, serve approximately 2 million students each year. It is estimated that in 1991-92, the CCC's will enroll almost 230,000 students in noncredit courses. As a result of numerous studies citing the lack of consistent and coordinated delivery of educational services to California's adult population, and in light of the growing population of students requiring English a Second Language (ESL) and literacy instruction, the Chancellor's Office for the CCC and the State Department of Education appointed the Adult Education Interim Steering Committee, which includes representatives of all noncredit adult education providers in the state. During the last 2 years, the Steering Committee has focused on three major issues: accountability, quality, and funding and access. To date, the Steering Committee has helped field test quality standards and performance measures for ESL; established local planning consortia to develop data elements for a statewide information management system; and developed a prototype tracking system to cover all providers of adult instruction. A review of future planned activities of the Steering Committee is included. A history of legislative efforts in California, which have led to existing policies for adult education, and an outline of recommendations for improving the adult education system statewide are appended. (PAA)

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NONCREDIT ADULT EDUCATION

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Board of Governors
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NONCREDIT ADULT EDUCATION 7

A Report

Background

Noncredit adult education is publicly-funded instruction that provides adults with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively as citizens.

In the Community Colleges, *noncredit courses* are offered to meet the special needs and capabilities of those students who do not desire or need to obtain unit credit at the time of enrollment. The courses provide remedial, developmental, occupational, and other educational opportunities. "In the public schools, *adult education* is a special division that addresses the needs of students beyond the age of 18, with the exception of some students who are concurrently enrolled in high school and adult programs." (Source: *Meeting California's Adult Education Needs*, California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), 1988.)

Analysis

In numerous studies over the past ten years, including the Behr Commission, the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan, the California Postsecondary Education Commission report on *Adult Education*, and the Adult Education Advisory Committee, the lack of coordinated and consistent delivery of noncredit adult educational services to California's adults has been cited. Over the last two years, the Chancellor's Office and the Department of Education have attempted to address many of these concerns through the work of the Joint Adult Education Interim Steering Committee.

The purpose of this item is to inform the Board about the role of Community Colleges in noncredit adult education, particularly in light of current discussions about competing priorities within our mission. The item presents history and background which detail the evolving role of our system in the area of noncredit adult education and the importance of this instructional area to the students we serve. In addition,

the item summarizes the work of the Joint Adult Education Interim Steering Committee and the role which this Committee is expected to play in the development, resolution, and implementation of emerging policy.

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Noncredit Adult Education

Statement of Problem

Noncredit adult education is essential to California because the populations it serves are its most vulnerable adults and because the skills it provides are critical to their ability to remain independent, to contribute to the economy of California, and even in some cases to their very survival. This critical need is addressed by a diverse array of institutions, in programs ancillary to the main mission of each. Community Colleges and adult schools are the two major providers of noncredit adult education. However, programs are also offered by Regional Occupational Centers/Programs, the Youth Authority, the Department of Corrections, the Employment Training Panel, the Joint Training Partnership Act programs, the State Library, and community-based organizations. These diverse institutions, with widely varying structures, resources, and degrees of State oversight, make it difficult to prevent duplication in services, and to develop or implement consistent policies statewide.

Noncredit adult education students are typically very mobile. As they move within the system and among the different providers, they are often asked to repeat intake procedures – such as taking the same placement examinations, producing copies of transcripts, and showing proof of eligibility for programs. As a result, too often these students are asked to repeat course content. This lack of coordination and consistent delivery of services by providers has been cited as a key problem in numerous studies.

Program Description

Noncredit adult education is publicly funded instruction for adults where the exit competencies are at or below the entrance competencies for College. In Community Colleges, **noncredit** courses are designed to provide remedial, developmental, occupational, and other educational opportunities critical for survival in today's society. These courses differ from **nondegree credit** courses which provide precollegiate basic skills designed to enable students to succeed in College. In the organizational structure of public schools, *adult education* is designated as a special division to address the needs of students beyond the age of 18, with the exception of some students who are concurrently enrolled in high school and adult programs.

Noncredit adult education courses and programs, eligible for State funding, are further defined categorically in the *Education Code* Sections 41976 and 84711, for Community Colleges and for adult schools, respectively, as follows:

1. English as a Second Language.

2. Short-term Vocational.

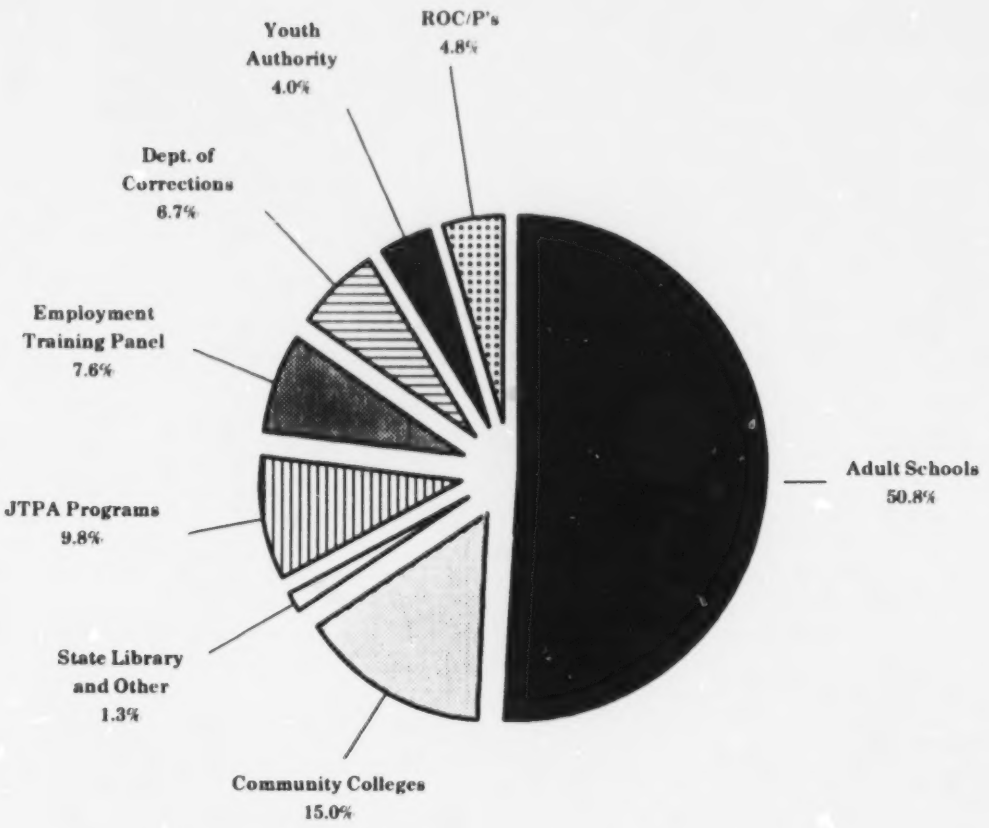
3. Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills.
4. Substantially Handicapped.
5. Older Adults.
6. Home Economics.
7. Health and Safety.
8. Parenting.
9. Citizenship.

It is important to note that these categories were negotiated and established to control growth and to protect legislative State priorities for noncredit adult education.

Approximately 3.5 million California students annually enroll in noncredit adult education instruction within the nine categories listed above. In the 1989 fiscal year, more than $700 million of State and federal monies were available for adult education in California. The two major providers, Community Colleges and adult schools, together received 66 percent of these funds – about $109 and $353 million, respectively, as illustrated in Table 1. The remaining 34 percent was distributed among other providers. (Source: *The California Adult Education System: Background Paper on the Response of Adult Education Institutions to the Needs of Californians*, Pacific Management and Research Associates (PMRA), 1989)

TABLE 1

Distribution of California Adult Education and Training Funds by Program



Note: In 1989, 22 percent of adult school funding came from the federal *Immigration Reform and Control Act* for temporary citizenship and literacy training programs.

Source: Adult Education Institute, Pacific Management and Research Associates

Of California's 107 Community Colleges, 95 offer noncredit instruction, while 231 of 393 local public high school and unified school districts have adult schools. Each year, these two major providers combined serve approximately two million students, and generate approximately 290,000 average daily attendance (ADA). It is estimated that in 1991-92, Community Colleges will enroll almost 230,000 students and generate approximately 90,000 ADA through noncredit courses. (Source: Fiscal Services Unit, Chancellor's Office, 1991)

All noncredit adult education courses are individually approved by the central offices of these two major providers. In the case of Community Colleges, the mandate for such approval is contained in Title 5 Section 55150. Standards for Community College noncredit courses have thus been strictly upheld for many years. However, assuring consistency of standards by the many different providers of adult education has been of continuing concern of the State Legislature and other policy bodies such as CPEC, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Governors.

History of Joint Adult Education Interim Steering Committee

In numerous studies over the past ten years, including the Behr Commission, the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan, the California Postsecondary Education Commission report on *Adult Education*, and the Adult Education Advisory Committee, the lack of coordinated and consistent delivery of noncredit adult educational services to California's adults has been cited. (A complete chronology of the history of legislative efforts and accomplishments relative to noncredit adult education is contained in Appendix A, an excerpt from the California Postsecondary Education Commission 1988 report: *Meeting California's Adult Education Needs.*)

In 1987, the Legislative Analyst directed the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) to form a technical advisory committee with staff from adult schools, the Community Colleges, the California Department of Education, and the Chancellor's Office, to report on adult education. The CPEC report, adopted by the Commission in 1988, recommended greater collaboration between the two State agencies through the development of: (1) a five-year plan for adult noncredit education and; (2) a comprehensive information system based upon comparable data across the two segments.

Subsequent to the CPEC study, the California Department of Education convened an advisory committee and prepared a planning document, *Adult Education for the 21st Century: Strategic Plan to Meet California's Long-Term Adult Education Needs*, released in June 1989. This report documented a projected explosion of need for adult learners coming to the workforce with marginal English language and literacy skills. Among other things, this long-term strategic plan proposed the development of an infrastructure, using state-of-the-art information technology to assure prompt and targeted instruction as needed, eliminate duplication, and monitor effectiveness. Fourteen recommendations clustered in four areas: Access, Accountability, Quality, and Coordination were developed with specific directions for the development of policy documents and feasibility studies applicable to each (Appendix B summarizes the 14 recommendations of the *Strategic Plan*.)

Adult Education Interim Steering Committee

In 1989, as a direct result of the *Strategic Plan*, Chancellor David Mertes and Superintendent Bill Honig jointly appointed the Adult Education Interim Steering

Committee and established the Adult Education Institute for Research and Planning (two of the 14 recommendations). The steering committee included representatives of all noncredit adult education providers in the State, including Community Colleges, adult schools, libraries, business and industry, and community-based organizations. Co-chaired by the California Department of Education and Chancellor's Office staff, the steering committee worked, for the last two years, with the Adult Education Institute (AEI) to refine and develop implementation strategies for a long-term, proactive plan for noncredit adult education. For the first time, providers, and particularly the two major participants in this effort, worked together to bring about reform in noncredit adult education that will clarify and reinforce the State's commitment to meeting the needs of adult learners.

During the last two years, the Adult Education Interim Steering Committee members have worked collaboratively to address three major issues: Accountability, Quality, and Funding and Access. Each of these three areas was also identified in all other major studies. A description of the sub-issues under each category follows:

1. *Accountability*

    a. Prior to the Steering Committee's formation, intersegmental work was begun to set quality standards and performance measures for English as a Second Language (ESL). Those standards are now being field-tested. Over the next two years, development of standards is proposed for five other categories: (1) Adult Basic Education (ABE); (2) secondary basic skills; (3) parent education; (4) programs for older adults; and (5) programs for substantially handicapped adults.

    b. Six local planning consortia, made up of local providers of noncredit adult education were charged with developing data elements for a statewide noncredit adult education and training management information system. Such a system would allow for data analysis by both state and local users. Each consortia developed paper models of a system and a final draft model is expected to be completed shortly.

    c. Procedures for adjusting instructional priorities, as the needs of the state change, are under discussion.

2. *Quality*

    a. A resolution was adopted by the Steering Committee calling for a set of common standards and reciprocity for all faculty teaching noncredit adult education courses. This resolution was transmitted to the California Community Colleges Academic Senate and the Commission for Teacher Credentialing for consideration. The Commission convened an advisory committee to review and revise the current Adult Education Credential. The Academic Senate resolved at its 1991 Spring Session to review the

Commission's work and to determine whether changes should be made to the Community College noncredit minimum qualifications to include reciprocity.

3. *Funding and Access*

   a. The EduCard, a "credit card" prototype, has been developed which will allow consistent and complete accounting of student services and achievements across all providers and over time. This tracking system will improve cost accounting and increase flexibility, allowing students to immediately access needed instruction and services without redundancy. When fully implemented, this card will be issued to all noncredit adult education students and will contain information regarding the students' educational records, their eligibility for alternative programs, and certification of demonstrated skills. The EduCard technology is currently being tested at Merced Adult School.

   b. Innovative funding possibilities for nontraditional instruction are also being explored, including separation of noncredit-based allocations from average daily attendance (ADA) that would be more appropriate for funding instruction via television. The need to explore alternative instructional delivery strategies is critical to the ability of noncredit program service providers to deliver instruction to adults in remote, geographically isolated regions of the State or in counties which are either not being served or that are underserved.

Future Steps

The work of the Adult Education Interim Steering Committee ended in June 1991. A new two-year contract to continue the work underway, effective January 1992, has been awarded to a Sacramento consulting firm, Pacific Management and Research Associates (PMRA). A new advisory committee will be convened to provide guidance and oversight in the continuing work described above as well as in the following areas:

1. Development of program standards for the five noncredit adult education categories listed earlier.

2. Development of a state plan for worksite learning that will assist noncredit adult education providers to respond to employers' needs.

3. Implementation of community skill clinics, one-stop assessment, and referral centers.

4. Coordination of advisory and outreach activities to ensure that the needs of state staff, local educational agencies, and other constituents in noncredit adult education are reflected in research and planning activities.

Conclusion

As competition for reduced resources increases, the discussions to eliminate California's commitment to noncredit adult education also increase. Noncredit adult education is particularly vulnerable because it is not seen as one of the primary missions of the Community Colleges or unified school districts. As has been noted above, the effect of eliminating such education altogether would seriously limit those in greatest need in the State from access to workplace literacy, job-readiness, and the ability to participate as full citizens.

The approach of the Chancellor's Office, in partnership with the Adult Education Interim Steering Committee, has been to insist that the resources expended in support of that commitment yield the greatest impact. The emphasis has been in the development of practical ways to eliminate redundancy and waste, gauge the success of outcomes, build quality into the curriculum and the faculty, and facilitate the efficient tracking of students through the system.

A healthy working relationship among the principle providers of noncredit adult education has developed over the past two years which will prove invaluable in the coming years of planning and implementation. As these efforts at cooperation result in specific accomplishments, or call for new Community College policies, the Chancellor's Office will report again to the Board of Governors.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

Legislative History of Adult Education in California

THIS appendix chronicles the history of legislative efforts and accomplishments in California that are the foundation of its existing policies for adult education.

1856: The first "evening school " was established by the San Francisco Board of Education.

1902: The California Constitution was amended to assure support for secondary schools. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction interpreted this support as not including the "evening schools." The San Francisco Board of Education filed suit, leading to the following 1907 court decision:

1907: The State Supreme Court ruling that "evening schools" could exist as separate legal entities entitled to share in State appropriations.

1915: The Home Teacher Act was signed into law by Governor Hiram Johnson. The driving force behind the Act was Mary S. Gibson -- a member of the California Commission of Immigration and Housing. Mrs. Gibson visualized the use of "home teachers" working with adults and children in their homes, preparing them for citizenship responsibilities and assisting in their social and cultural adjustment. In 1926, the Department of Parent Education evolved from this beginning

1917: Legislation was passed to authorize school districts to offer special day and evening classes for students aged 18-21 who were not enrolled in "day schools."

1919: The Part-Time Education Act established continuation education for students aged 14-18 who were not enrolled in day schools and classes for students aged 18-21 who were not proficient in English.

1921: Legislation was passed requiring that Americanization classes be formed when requested by 25 more people.

The State Department of Education was created with the Superintendent of Public Instruction as its administrator.

Junior college districts were established.

California accepted the provisions of the federal Smith-Lever and Vocational Rehabilitation Acts for vocational education.

1926: The Department of Parent Education was created.

1927: The State Department of Education was reorganized, forming a Division of Adult Education.

1931: Legislation passed that provided additional funds for adult high schools and that placed the administration of Parent Education under the State Department of Education. The first nursery school for parent observation and study was established.

1940: The federal government requested adult classes to provide training for defense workers and offered to pay the costs of the program. Between July 1940 and May 1945, nearly 1 million California workers were trained in adult classes, more than half of them in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, San Diego, Long Beach, and Burbank

1941: Separate evening junior colleges were authorized.

1945: Legislation established some categories of adult education as well as standards for attendance, curriculum, administration, counseling, credit, certificates or diplomas, formulas for computation of average daily attendance, and the collection of tuition except for classes in English, citizenship, and elementary subjects.

Source: *Meeting California's Adult Education Needs*, California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1988.

1947: Legislation restructured State support for education by changing the way money was apportioned, and, since adult classes were less costly to run than high school or college classes, adult education experienced rapid growth.

1966: The Federal Adult Basic Education Act provided funds for specific adult education classes and established the State Department of Education as the agency responsible for distributing federal adult education funds.

The Legislature adopted Assembly Concurrent Resolution 32, which was intended to curtail the transfer of programs from adult schools to junior colleges purely for administrative or fiscal reasons and which stated the Legislature's priority for adult education that students receive certificates or degrees that would improve their employability.

1968: Legislation authorized a 10¢ tax levy for adult education and defined adult students as 21 or older enrolled for less than a full day of 140 minutes.

Two separate administrative districts were established, one for the school system and one for the community colleges. More shifts in programs (such as from secondary schools to adult schools and from adult schools to community colleges) occurred to realize funding advantages rather than for educational advantages for students were also evident.

Adult education was being funded by a variety of sources, including federal and State apportionments and local and county taxes.

1970: Senate Concurrent Resolution 131 authorized a study of the delineation of function in adult education funding

1971: Senate Concurrent Resolution 765 required that the State Department of Education and the Chancellor's Office of the Community Colleges conduct a joint review of Adult Education classes, come to agreement on delineation of function, and report to the Legislature by April 1972.

1972: The above report was submitted to the Legislature.

Senate Bill 94 established area coordinating councils and delineated functions.

1973: Senate Bill 6 restructured community college finance, serving to change the formula by which State support of adult education was calculated and to require more community college district support for adult education classes, with the State remaining fully responsible for community college average daily attendance.

Senate Bill 90 restructured State school financing, establishing cost-of-living increases and the concept of revenue limits, permitting income averaging that resulted in the growth of low-cost programs to offset high-cost programs and a shift for much of adult education to General Fund support at the school level.

1975: Governor Brown placed a 5 percent growth cap on adult education and community college average daily attendance.

Assembly Bill 1821 established Regional Adult Vocational Education Councils that were to meet at least bimonthly, and it mandated (1) review of adult and noncredit courses to eliminate duplication, (2) mutually agreed upon delineation of function, and (3) annual short-term planning reports.

1976: Assembly Bill 65 restructured adult education funding by removing the 5 percent cap imposed in 1975 and establishing revenue limits using average State expenditure data, leading to the effective control of adult education growth.

Senate Bill 1641 returned community college funding to local tax rate control tied to property values, not number of students enrolled. Incentives for new courses were reduced because of reduced State funds and because State funds were provided at an average rate. The bill also redefined adults as students 19 or older who were not enrolled in a regular high school program; it specified that noncredit and credit average daily attendance were to be paid at the same rate and that adult education funds were to be spent only on adult education courses; and it established categories of programs for older adults and the substantially handicapped.

1978: Proposition 13, which limited increases in local property taxes in California, was passed by

the voters one month before the State budget was due to be signed, and resulted in significant changes in authority to manage local programs that had historically been supported by property taxes. Rather than the elected officials at the city and county level determining budgets and priorities for their districts, the Governor and the Legislature were responsible for establishing the policies and mechanisms for funding the activities of the schools and community colleges. This change from local to State authority brought concerns for equalization, control, and accountability. At the same time, the total dollars available to fund local programs had been decreased by the tax initiative, and reductions were necessary to balance the State budget.

In response, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 154 and Assembly Bill 2190 as emergency "block-grant" bills for one year. They eliminated adult education revenue limits, implemented block grants to districts as part of the Proposition 13 "bailout," and changed the State-funded adult school categories to eight. Community college adult education continued to be fully funded, although capped.

1979: Assembly Bill 8 addressed the significant changes in State and local authority with respect to property-tax expenditures. It established a 2.5 percent growth cap and a 6 percent cost-of-living adjustment for adult schools, specified revenue limits based on 1977-1978 spending rates, and created mandated categories of State-supported programs for adult schools. Community colleges were funded at a single average rate for credit and noncredit courses and were instructed to study and determine priorities that warranted continued State support. Transfer of programs from adult schools to community colleges increased.

1980: Assembly Bill 2020 created the Adult Education Policy Commission (the Behr Commission) to prepare policy recommendations on delineation of function, revenue, and expenditure equalization for adult education. That Commission established the following goals to guide its deliberations:

1. Meeting the educational needs of California's adults should be the highest priority.
2. Programs which are serving those needs effectively should not be subject to changes which would disrupt, weaken, or close them.
3. Certain population groups have a demonstrably greater need for adult education than others.
4. Some geographic regions have such large "high-need" populations that even all providers combined are unable to provide essential services.
5. Funding parity is a worthy goal.
6. Local officials are best qualified to determine local mix of programs.

Assembly Bill 2196 increased the number of adult education categories to 10; recognized that some regions have such high demand for certain categories that all segments' efforts were insufficient; stated that parity between segments was a goal; and encouraged decisions based on educational rather than fiscal considerations. Two problems were that community colleges had the ability to transfer excess revenues from noncredit to credit offerings, and their credit offerings were supported at a higher rate than either noncredit or adult school programs.

1981: Assembly Bill 1626 reduced the community college reimbursement rate to $1,100/ADA, comparable to the adult school rate, tied the ADA cap to changes in the State's adult population; imposed the ten mandated categories, slightly revised, on community college noncredit courses in an effort to control spending and to protect what were considered State priorities for adult and noncredit education, and required community colleges to classify courses as credit, noncredit, or community service and to update their classification annually.

In analyzing the issues surrounding adult and noncredit education, the Behr Commission found that, "adult education programs tend to gravitate toward the source of maximum revenue" (p. 3) and reported that although the Legislature had made many attempts to solve the problems of adult education funding, often the "solution to one problem has . . . resulted in the creation of problems in other areas" (ibid.). The Commission further found that the absence of a definition of adult education common to the adult schools and the

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community colleges' noncredit programs was a significant problem. It concluded its work with recommendations in the following areas:

1. That all classes, courses and programs be funded at the same rate per ADA regardless of provider;
2. That any increase in ADA be funded up to a maximum of 5 percent per year;
3. That both major providers receive a common rate for inflation; and
4. That elected local boards of education and community college boards negotiate new, formal, binding delineation of function agreements.

The State's fiscal crisis in 1981, the recommendations of the Behr Commission, and the sunset of the community college provisions in Assembly Bill 8, led to new legislation which brought further restrictions and State control to adult and noncredit education. The community college reimbursement rate was reduced, the categories for State support were revised and imposed on both the adult schools and the community colleges and adult education monies were made a separate item in school district budgets. Disparities between districts and between providers were being addressed and a State system for the funding of adult and noncredit education was evolving. However, no overall State policy was being developed to guide funding nor to recognize the special problems faced by districts because of the diversity that existed across the state.

1982: Senate Bill 813 implemented general wide-ranging educational reform.

1984: Senate Bill 1570 created the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, which examined issues in adult education and noncredit instruction.

Senate Bill 1379 prohibited use of State revenues to support community services courses.

1985: Senate Bill 2064 requested the Master Plan Commission to study community colleges as a first order of business.

1987: The Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, in its community college document, *The Challenge of Change*, recommended further study of adult education/noncredit instruction and a legislative mandate for delineation of function agreements.

1988: In May, the Legislature's Joint Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education commented broadly on adult and noncredit education. In particular, it recommended that those categories identified as offering transitions to opportunity (English as a Second Language, Citizenship, and Basic Skills) should be relieved of the "cap" and allowed to satisfy current demand with the assurance of full reimbursement by the State (p. 107). The Committee chose to defer further recommendations until publication of this present report.

During the previous five years, the Legislative Analyst's Office had raised several issues about adult and noncredit instruction in its annual Budget Analysis and had suggested changes intended to improve the system. These recommendations have included the deletion of those categories that might serve recreational or avocational interests, some reduction of General Fund appropriation to adult education, the elimination of the arbitrary 2.5 percent growth cap for adult schools and the establishment of a growth allowance based on rate of growth in the State's adult population similar to the community college model, changes in the statutory cost-of-living adjustment, and a reduction of the funding level for concurrently enrolled high school students in adult education courses. Few changes have been adopted by the Legislature, however, despite the persistence of the Legislative Analyst. In the current 1988-89 Budget Analysis, the Legislative Analyst stated that equalization funds for adult education are no longer necessary since all districts previously operating below the statewide average have been brought to the average appropriation. More significantly, the Analyst presented data that show enormous growth (400 percent) between 1980-81 and 1986-87 in the adult education ADA of concurrently enrolled high school students -- largely due to the participation of districts in large urban areas -- and once again, the Legislative Analyst recommended funding equity for concurrently enrolled high school students.

APPENDIX B

Outline of Recommendations

Improve Access to Users

1. Funding to Meet Today's Needs
2. Funding for Innovation and Performance
3. Community Adult Education Information Services
4. EduCard (Adult Education Access Card)
5. Linkage of Support Services to Increase Access

Improve Accountability

6. Procedures for Adjusting Instructional Priorities
7. Quality Standards and Performance Measures
8. Integrated Adult Education Data System

Improve Quality and Responsiveness

9. Program and Staff Development Support
10. Teacher Certification Appropriate to Adult Education
11. Facilities for the Future
12. Special Grants to Test Program Innovations

Improve Planning and Coordination

13. Collaborative Planning
14. Adult Education Research and Planning Institute

Source: *Adult Education for the 21st Century: Strategic Plan to Meet California's Long-Term Adult Education Needs*, June 1989.